DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 397 045 SP 036 784

AUTHOR Houser, Neil O.; Chevalier, Marsha
TITLE Multicultural Self-Development in the Preservice Classroom: Equity Education for the Dominant Culture.
PUB DATE [96]
NOTE 31p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Students; *Consciousness Raising; *Cultural Awareness; Elementary Education; Higher Education; Methods Courses; *Multicultural Education; Perspective Taking; Preservice Teacher Education; *Self Actualization; Social Environment; *Student Development; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Multicultural Materials

ABSTRACT

European American educators can no longer ignore or presume to "serve" other sociocultural groups simply by changing those groups. Within a democratic and pluralistic society, individuals must be equally willing to modify their own beliefs and actions in light of the experiences and concerns of others. In doing so, "mainstream Americans" can develop a broader, more empathetic and socially active sense of self. Such development is essential if the dominant culture is to do its part in promoting the greater good of society. Qualitative data are presented from literacy and social studies methods courses to discuss the professors' efforts to promote multicultural self-development among European American preservice teachers (N=57). In each course, experiences were provided representing different sociocultural perspecitives. Students were challenged to examine systematically their feelings and observations. Along with multicultural literature, practicum experiences in both courses were used as a basis for class discussion. Although multicultural self-development proved both difficult and time consuming, the conclusion is drawn that it is nonetheless possible. (Contains 52 references.) (ND)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 397 045

MULTICULTURAL SELF-DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESERVICE CLASSROOM: EQUITY EDUCATION FOR THE DOMINANT CULTURE

Neil O. Houser

University of Delaware

Marsha Chevalier

Sonoma State University

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

N. Houser

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP036784

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MULTICULTURAL SELF-DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESERVICE CLASSROOM: EQUITY EDUCATION FOR THE DOMINANT CULTURE

Abstract

European American educators can no longer ignore or presume to "serve" other sociocultural groups simply by changing those groups. Within a democratic and pluralistic society, we must be equally willing to modify our own beliefs and actions in light of the experiences and concerns of others. In so doing, "mainstream Americans" can develop a broader, more empathetic and socially active sense of self. Such development is essential if the dominant culture is to do its part in promoting the greater good of society. In this paper we use qualitative data gathered from our literacy and social studies methods courses to discuss our efforts to promote multicultural self-development among European American preservice teachers. Although such development is both difficult and time-consuming, we conclude that it is nonetheless possible.

MULTICULTURAL SELF-DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESERVICE CLASSROOM: EQUITY EDUCATION FOR THE DOMINANT CULTURE 1

European American teachers and teacher educators in our pluralistic society can no longer ignore the plight of those less privileged than themselves (Greene, 1993; Nieto, 1992; Sleeter & Grant, 1988). Neither can we "serve" others by advocating their unidirectional assimilation into the sociocultural mainstream (Banks, 1987; Ogbu, 1987). Within a democratic and pluralistic society, if any group is expected to modify its beliefs and actions for the greater social good, all groups should be expected to do the same. Instead of "helping" others by changing them, the dominant culture can perhaps best serve other sociocultural groups by learning from them, by gaining a deeper understanding of their needs and perspectives, and by challenging our own beliefs and actions. Indeed, European Americans concerned with promoting social equity ultimately need to develop a broader, more empathetic and multifaceted sense of self (Baldwin, 1988; Houser, In Press; Nieto, 1992).

This paper examines an approach we used to promote multicultural self-development for preservice teachers. We first describe the need for multicultural development for members of the dominant culture. Then, we discuss two basic assumptions related to the process of self-development. After addressing the developmental process, we describe our teaching and research settings and approaches. Next, we discuss the effects of our approach upon the multicultural self-development of preservice teachers. We conclude with a brief summary and discussion of implications for teacher education.

Why Multicultural Self-Development for the Dominant Culture?

The gap between those who can and cannot reasonably be expected to benefit from our

American ideals (e.g., equal opportunity, "justice for all," "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness") is influenced by mainstream American thought and action, including personal resistance to change and compromise (Baldwin, 1988; Banks, 1987, 1989; Houser, In Press; Sleeter & Grant, 1988). Although some mainstream Americans more fully appreciate the need for social equity than others, few are willing to compromise their own political and economic advantages in order to narrow the opportunity gap (Sleeter & Grant, 1988).

The opportunity gap is also reflected in cultural mismatches between European American teachers and the "minority" students they teach (e.g., Anyon, 1979; Au, 1980; Heath, 1987; Philips, 1972). These mismatches are perpetuated through traditional curricula that focus on the experiences of mainstream Americans while ignoring the lives, histories and social conditions of other cultural groups.2 Banks (1989) has noted that the traditional "mainstream-centric" curriculum marginalizes the experiences and cultures of dominated ethnic groups while failing to reflect their dreams, hopes and perspectives. This kind of curriculum also has negative consequences for European American students because:

> (I)t reinforces their false sense of superiority...and denies them the opportunity to benefit from the knowledge, perspectives, and frames of reference that can be gained from studying and experiencing other cultures and groups. (Banks, 1989, p. 189)

Since unidirectional cultural assimilation is undemocratic and the unmediated redistribution of wealth is highly unlikely, narrowing the opportunity gap ultimately requires a change in the perspectives (e.g., Eurocentrism; rugged individualism; bigotry; racism and sexism; xenophobia; social Darwinism) and actions that underlie and support it. While mainstream Americans have been most responsible for perpetuating such beliefs, they also have the greatest

means by which to modify them. However, changes of this nature ultimately require the development of a different, more multifaceted and socially concerned sense of self.

The Process of Multicultural Self-Development

Theoretically, the more diverse one's sociocultural experiences, the broader and more inclusive will be the development of "self" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Hewitt, 1994; Houser, In Press; Mead, 1934; Nieto, 1992). Accordingly, the more inclusive and empathetic one's sense of identity, the more difficult it will be to think and act in ways that oppress others. To marginalize a group with whom one identifies involves marginalizing an essential aspect of oneself (Houser, In Press).

Based on the premise that multicultural self-development is both possible and desirable, our preservice methods courses utilized an approach designed to promote the development of a broader, more socially and culturally inclusive sense of self (Houser, In Press). Two underlying assumptions of this approach involve the relationship between cognitive dissonance and emotional safety and the relationship between having an experience and using language to reflect upon and otherwise interpret that experience.

Safety and Dissonance

The first assumption is that self-development, like most forms of psychological growth, requires a balance between cognitive dissonance and emotional safety. On the one hand, learning and development result from the struggle to reconcile new and confusing ideas with existing understandings (Anderson, 1985; Neisser, 1976; Piaget, 1972). On the other hand, confronting rather than avoiding dissonant, personally threatening propositions requires a measure of affective

safety (Atwell, 1988; Chevalier, 1994; Paley, 1992). Few are willing or able to challenge their deeply held beliefs without some form of emotional support. Where optimum self-development is the goal, neither condition is adequate without the other.

Experience and Discussion

The second assumption is that self-development, which begins with the process of social interaction, requires both experience and discussion (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Mead, 1934; Vygotsky, 1986; Wertsch, 1991). As individuals interact with others within their social environment, they gradually develop greater understanding of the world and a broader sense of self-identity. The broader and more multifaceted one's sociocultural experiences, the broader and more socially and culturally inclusive will be the development of self (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Hewitt, 1991; Houser, In Press; Mead, 1934; Nieto, 1992).

Although experience is necessary for self-development, experience alone is insufficient. Reflection and discussion are equally important. For experience to have meaning it must be interpreted, and the tools of human interpretation are linguistic in nature. It is entirely possible to have an experience without even being aware of it. Only through the use of words, or symbols, are we able to reflect upon and otherwise interpret our experiences (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934; Vygotsky, 1986). Thus, in addition to having an experience, self-development also involves discussion and reflection upon the meaning of that experience.

It is possible to identify at least three levels of discussion and reflection essential to promoting multicultural self-development. First, the salient aspects of the experience need to be identified. As with any activity, the goals and obstacles must be "named" before they can be consciously and systematically acted upon (Greene, 1988). Where the goal is to promote the

greater good of society, it is important that students identify those factors most closely related to the existence of the opportunity gap.

In addition to understanding how a particular experience is related to social inequity, it is also important to recognize the social and historical pervasiveness of the problem in general. Preservice teachers need to understand that the opportunity gap has a history that transcends specific time periods and social and geographical locations. It is not uncommon to hear the dominant culture simply blame the victims of economic poverty or conclude that racism, although admittedly undesirable, was nonetheless a thing of the past. Those who understand that the system of oppression is so pervasive that it has become virtually "invisible" will be less able to dismiss social inequity as an artifact of a particular time period or isolated social context.

Finally, it is important for mainstream Americans to identify their own (albeit tacit) complicity in perpetuating the opportunity gap. It is one thing to acknowledge that a problem exists, and quite another to recognize one's own involvement in the situation. The task is to help mainstream American preservice teachers recognize their unconscious involvement in perpetuating the opportunity gap and identify the ways in which these actions are legitimized by their most fundamental perspectives of self and society. This awareness is essential if preservice teachers are to become part of the solution.

The Teaching and Research Setting and Approaches

This section describes the methods we used to facilitate and examine the multicultural self-development of fifty-seven preservice teachers that occurred during a semester in our social studies and literacy methods classes. We address the goals and approaches of the two courses, the use of multicultural literature in our preservice instruction, the general characteristics of the

participants, and the research methods and theoretical assumptions used to collect and analyze the data.

The Classes

The social studies and literacy classes were required components of a four-year baccalaureate program in elementary teacher education. Although both courses were intended for the junior year, none of our students took them concurrently. While social studies was part of a semester-long curriculum block that included mathematics and science, the literacy class was in another block focused on the various aspects of the language arts. The general goal of the social studies course was to prepare educators to teach the knowledge, skills and sensitivities needed for responsible citizenship participation. On the other hand, the literacy course focused on ways to teach various modes of communication and understanding required for personal and social competence.

Although our course goals and structures were far from identical, there were several notable similarities. We both recognized that the preservice teachers would be working in a democratic and pluralistic society, and we both sought to prepare critical, reflective practitioners who participate in constructing their professional knowledge rather than uncritically accepting and implementing the ideas of others. Thus, we provided varying experiences representing different sociocultural perspectives, challenged our students to systematically examine what they felt and observed, and encouraged them to continually question that which did not seem to make sense. Since their critical inquiry was often directed toward us, it was necessary to apply the standards of self-evaluation to our own assumptions and practices as well.

In addition to our mutual focus on reflective practice within a pluralistic democracy, our

classes also shared similar structural characteristics. Both courses, for example, included semester-long practicum experiences, and each class utilized experience-based approaches to integrate theory and practice. These approaches were based on interactions and activities in the field, personal observations and life experiences, and experiences provided through literature, films and audiotapes, simulation activities, and so forth. Finally, students in each class collaborated to develop lessons and instructional units, solve problems and discuss issues, and enhance their capacity for critical social analysis and self-reflection. Thus, although the social studies and literacy courses were not isomorphic, they nonetheless shared many basic goals and approaches.

Multicultural Literature and Preservice Instruction

Perhaps our clearest instructional similarities involved a shared commitment to balancing safety and dissonance, utilizing experience as a basis for discussion, and using multicultural literature to supplement and challenge our students' existing understandings. Based upon the relationship between dissonance and safety, we sought to provide an affectively safe yet intellectually sound classroom environment. By affirming our students' efforts without necessarily agreeing with their conclusions, we created an atmosphere of emotional support as a backdrop against which they could risk addressing controversial, personally threatening social issues.

Similarly, based upon the assumption of experience and discussion, we provided opportunities for the preservice teachers to address a variety of meaningful sociocultural experiences. We helped our students name those aspects most closely related to the opportunity gap, apply social and historical parallels, and contemplate the implications for their personal

perspectives and actions. While the process was neither linear nor comprehensive in any given lesson, this general approach nonetheless informed our courses throughout the semester.

[Insert Figure 1]

Among the varied experiences that can promote multicultural self-development (e.g., Banks, 1989; Houser, In Press; Noddings, 1992), we relied heavily on the use of "multicultural literature." Literature written by or about those who have been systematically marginalized on the basis of their culture can facilitate vicarious participation in the lives of others, deconstruction of cultural stereotypes, critical examination of self and society, and even commitment to the development of a better world (Coles, 1989; Eanet, 1990; Florez & Hadaway, 1986; Garcia & Pugh, 1992; Greene, 1993; Norton, 1985; Reimer, 1992; Roberts & Cecil, 1993; Stover, 1988). Based on these premises, our classes included multicultural novels appropriate for elementary and secondary classrooms as well as more "scholarly" materials written for adults.

The nonfictional materials included works such as McLuhan's (1971) Touch the Earth: A Portrait of Indian Existence, Storm's (1972) Seven Arrows and Zinn's (1980) A People's History of the United States. This literature presented alternative views on the importance of community, on personal responsibility for the greater good of society, and on historical events such as the colonization of America and the "westward expansion."

We also used multicultural novels such as Beatty's (1992) Lupita Mañana, Greene's (1973) Summer of my German Soldier, Highwater's (1986) I Wear the Morning Star, Myers' (1988) Scorpions and Uchida's (1978) Journey Home. The child-protagonists in these novels dealt with cultural discrimination, economic deprivation, the challenges of being ethnically mixed in a society

dominated by monocultural values, and other equally difficult social dilemmas.

Interaction with these materials ranged from "literature circles" (an approach in which small groups read and discuss different pieces of literature and then report their responses to the class, e.g., Harste & Short, 1991) to the use of response journals as a catalyst for personal reflection and paired, small group or whole class discussion. Regardless of the form of interaction, we encouraged our students to identify the issues related to the opportunity gap, apply them to parallel situations, and consider the implications for their personal thoughts and actions.

The Students

Most of the fifty-seven students in the study were middle and upper middle class European American women less than twenty-five years of age. Few of these preservice teachers had significant experience interacting with members of other sociocultural groups, and many planned to return to the suburbs after earning their certification. There were just four men in the study, and the only person of color was an African American woman pursuing her credential after several years away from school. Approximately 25% of the participants identified themselves as Jewish. Most of the students initially held perspectives characteristic of the American mainstream, including a firm belief in the benefits of cultural assimilation, acceptance of the need to limit immigration, and a tendency to blame the economically disadvantaged for creating and maintaining their own social conditions.

The Research Methods and Assumptions

As teachers, we sought to facilitate pedagogical understanding and personal development.

However, as researchers our goal was to systematically document, analyze and explain the effects of our efforts.3 We wished to understand the self-development that occurred as our students contemplated new ideas and relationships, to identify the personal and social experiences that influenced such growth, and to explain our findings to other teachers and researchers.

To gather the necessary data, we used qualitative research tools including participant observation, informal interviews, audio-taped discussions, and response journals maintained by each student throughout the semester (Berg, 1989; Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). Our data analysis was guided by an interpretivist paradigm which assumes that knowledge is socially constructed rather than externally transmitted and that learning and development are context specific rather than universal and absolute (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Jacob, 1987; Mishler, 1979).

Multicultural Development in the Preservice Classroom

In this section, we discuss the development that resulted as our students struggled to reconcile their existing beliefs with the information presented in the multicultural literature. We examine the initial dissonance created by the material, the gradual changes in their views about others, and their eventual modifications in personal perspective and social activity. We argue that varying degrees of self-development did in fact take place for many of the preservice teachers with whom we worked.

Experience, Discussion and Dissonance

Reading and discussing the multicultural literature forced many of the students to struggle with their existing values and beliefs. After discussing Summer of my German Soldier and I Wear

the Morning Star, for example, several students questioned the inclusion of religion in lessons about culture:

S_1: [To the Teacher (T)] Do you consider religious things multiculturalism?

T: Sure, you bet.

S_1: But are you able to teach that in school then? Are you allowed to talk about religious multicultural issues or just race.

T: It's really sensitive. I do in my ESL classes, but I have more freedom there because it's not a public school.

S_2: There was one book [we used in our field experience] with the Sky God, and we weren't sure if we were allowed to talk about--I mean, how far do you have to take that? ...We weren't sure if we needed to change that to like "the Sky King" or something....I said, "God," and I thought about it while I was reading it. And I thought, "Oh, geez! We were going to change this!" But it was too late.

T: I know, and it's a gray area when you are talking about myths and you're talking about legends because you are going to have references to these personified gods....And then the danger becomes trivializing someone else's beliefs....I think that you did right to be faithful to the book, but, you know, you could run into problems from it if there's someone there that takes exception to it.

S_1: But is it also fair to talk about a culture and leave out their religion?

T: I know...I hear you.

S_1: A lot of times in the Native American culture, religion is a big part of their culture, and you can't just talk about what they wear and what they eat....So is it really necessarily talking about religion if it comes into the conversation and [you are] saying "this is part of

> their culture"? [Otherwise] you are selecting what you teach. I mean, you are selecting what...part of the culture you want them to know about.

For these students, the literature created a dilemma. Their beliefs about separating religion and education were challenged by the proposition that effective multicultural education simply cannot avoid such issues. These contradicting positions created a sense of dissonance that required reconciliation.

As our students began to recognize that serious social education requires attending to substantive and often controversial issues, some expressed a strong desire to avoid this role. While we acknowledged the discomfort they were experiencing, we were unwilling to accept avoidance as a viable alternative. Our responses provided emotional support; however, our subsequent instructional decisions continued to promote dissonance, reflection and growth.

Given our students' existing perspectives, we anticipated the resistance we encountered. Some of the material challenged the preservice teachers' most deeply held beliefs. An example involved a small group of Jewish students who had read Summer of my German Soldier. After the group discussed the novel, one of the students publicly denounced the book in a passionate statement representing their mutual concerns. She concluded by suggesting that the rest of the class, including the teacher, was in no position to reasonably judge whether or not to use this material:

> [Without] having any prior knowledge about the situation you really wouldn't think anything was wrong with a Jewish girl housing a German soldier....If you don't have any prior knowledge, you would think that all the German soldiers were okay.

Given the persistence of anti-Semitism in the United States and abroad, these students' criticisms were certainly justified. Material such as Summer of my German Soldier must be considered against a broader understanding of the history of the Jewish people and the horror of the Holocaust. Still, because they rejected the entire novel, several of these students failed to benefit from the author's more universal message that love and respect can help deconstruct damaging stereotypes and bridge seemingly intractable religious, political and cultural barriers.

Since extreme resistance can jeopardize self-development, we were particularly attentive to these kinds of situations. Sometimes we simply waited to see what would happen as the semester proceeded; however, just as often we modified our subsequent interactions to provide the additional support needed for continued struggle, reflection and development.

Changing Perspectives

At times we were concerned that the issues selected might lead to increased resistance and the entrenchment of mainstream perspectives rather than self-examination and growth. Although this may have been true in some cases, the majority of the students did eventually modify their social and personal perspectives. While some of these changes were rudimentary, others were profound.

After reading novels like Journey Home (a story about a 12-year-old girl who was forced during World War II to move from her home in California to a United States concentration camp for Japanese Americans), some students changed both their understanding of other sociocultural groups and their perspectives on their own history and culture. As one student stated:

> This time period is a black mark on American history, but it should not be forgotten or swept under the rug....Most U.S. history teachers while teaching about World War II

> focus only on how wonderful and victorious the United States was. Most people are unaware that [Japanese] concentration camps even existed in this country.

This student and many others felt cheated. While some believed that their teachers, parents and society were ill-informed, others wondered whether they had been deliberately deceived. This was also the case with the nonfictional literature. One student, for example, expressed bitter resentment after reading A People's History of the United States:

> I find it so hard to believe this is the first I've ever heard about Christopher Columbus and his use of [Arawak] slaves on his ship. I can't believe no one has ever said anything about it [to me]. I feel deceived and lied to. Who makes the decisions on what information should be let out and what should be taught? In today's society children struggle to determine whether or not they should trust an adult. By omitting this information, do they honestly believe they're protecting future generations?

Another student expressed similar concerns:

> I had been taught the sweetened, covered up version...of Columbus, and grew up with some vague notion of a great man who "discovered" America...I remember nothing about any "Indians," and certainly never learned that this "great man" savagely and ruthlessly conquered civilizations that already densely populated what I thought was "virgin" land.

Thus, the literary experiences and class discussions did influence changes in perspective. Sometimes these changes were immediate; however, they were more often constructed gradually as the students continued to discuss and reflect upon a variety of experiences. This was the case

with one of the students who eventually conceded the broader points in Summer of my German Soldier:

> In a way, in that novel, it could teach the students that people often do things in war on both sides of the issue that they wouldn't do in peaceful times. It showed...that not all Jews are good and not all Germans are bad.

Although this student originally rejected the author's thesis, she gradually began to modify her position. This development was particularly significant given the persistence of anti-Semitism and the fact that many of her peers retained their rigid resistance to the author's premise.

Changed understanding was also facilitated through empathy with the characters in true to life novels such as Scorpions. This story is about an African American youth named Jamal who, in spite of his intense desire and considerable efforts to gain an academic education and move out of Harlem, was nonetheless unable to overcome the broader societal conditions that constrained first his material options, and finally his dreams. After reading about the staggering hardships endured by Jamal and his family, one student commented:

> People say that children in a situation should do the right thing and make the good decision, but it really didn't seem like Jamal had decisions to make. Everything was being done, like he was being forced to do things and just put on the path. He really didn't have decisions to make. Everything was decided for him.

Novels like Scorpions helped the students question their assumptions that all Americans are equally free to choose how they live and are therefore equally responsible for whatever personal difficulties and diminished life chances they may encounter.

Another novel that promoted self-examination was Lupita Mañana, a story about a 13-year-old girl who, after her father died in a fishing accident near their small village in Mexico, was sent by her destitute mother to search for work across the border. After enduring hunger, thirst, exhaustion, betrayal and robbery, Lupita and her brother finally made it to the United States. However, upon their arrival they discovered the new hardships of menial labor and continual fear of discovery and deportation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. After reading this novel, two preservice teachers reexamined their beliefs about undocumented immigrants:

> S_3: I think about all that these two children endured for their mama and family, and I think of how strong they were to do this alone. I don't think I could be so strong. I think this book made me realize too that there are thousands of people who try to immigrate into the United States every day. I never think about these things because they don't directly affect my life...
>
> S_4: I've always wondered why [the immigrants who are treated poorly at my mother's place of employment] stay around. Now I realize why. They cannot find jobs elsewhere.

In this case, the students not only began to change their general understandings about another group of people, but they also reinterpreted their prior attitudes and personal experiences on the basis of powerful new information.

Personal Change and Social Action

Although many students modified their social beliefs and reinterpreted their personal attitudes, it can be argued that little has really been accomplished until self-concept and personal activity are changed as well. Whether or not this is the case, developments of this nature also

occurred and were among the most profound we observed. In this section we examine the effects of our approach upon the preservice teachers' understandings of self, their immediate activities, and their personal and professional plans for action.

It is difficult to identify the long-term, often tacit effects of a particular experience upon an individual's self-development. However, we are convinced the combination of experiences provided throughout the semester influenced several students' immediate actions as well as their future plans for teaching. This was the case with one preservice teacher who read and discussed A People's History of the United States:

> I was very shocked by this article....I definitely agree with Zinn that it is incredibly important...to not believe everything you read without question. What famous "heroes" like Columbus did in order to make themselves "heroic" should be known. Practicing slavery, abuse, etc., is not okay. But, in order for children to learn from past experiences, they must know about them.

This reaction is different from previous responses in that it implies a commitment to act. Beyond modifying her own approach to reading, this preservice teacher resolved that she would address rather than avoid controversial issues in her classroom. Another student made a similar decision:

> If I must "celebrate" Columbus Day while teaching, I will use it as a day of observation and discussion, to examine what happened to both Spain and the people of the Americas when the cultures met.

Comparable changes were also made by other preservice teachers. For example, a student who read Lupita Mañana initially questioned the teacher's role in helping children wrestle with

issues of ethnic identity. As she considered the matter in greater depth, she adjusted her views about her future role:

> S_5: We read Lupita Mañana, and [Lupita] was overall trying to keep her heritage, but she knew that she had to do things to stay in the United States and would probably have to stay there. You can't make decisions for children like that. I don't know that you can even lead them because there's not a right answer to that. It might seem like life in the United States in some avenues might be better for her, but that's not your decision to make.
>
> T: Yeah, what can you do to help her make her own decisions though? I mean, in her case she doesn't even have significant others to fall back on.
>
> S_5: I guess you can just be a friend to her, I think--let her know that you're somebody that [she] could trust.

The most substantial instances of multicultural development were characterized by conscious recognition of the need to modify oneself and the development of viable plans to do so. A student who read Touch the Earth seemed clearly to understand the need for personal change:

> As I read the story, I could only think about how greedy, superficial and materialistic our country is. The Native American ways of non-ownership of land were peaceful and becoming to me--they were ideal. Yet, in the end the natives succumbed to our ways. This book provided me with an angle on things, a perspective, that is very different from my own....To me, it all comes down to values. Is that which Americans tend to value that which they should be valuing? Are the right things important to me? I think McLuhan forces the reader to question his/her own ideals and values. I only hope that I am able to

question mine and am strong enough to change any that I feel need changing.

Another student also recognized the limitations of her personal experience:

> I come from a very limited background and used to think I should be colorblind in order to not be prejudice. But now I see we must recognize the differences all cultures have and experience their cultures as much as we can.

To broaden her experience, this preservice teacher joined (and eventually became president of) a student organization whose primary goal was the promotion of intercultural education and equity. Having perceived her limitations, she consciously devised a strategy to facilitate her own self-development.

Finally, a powerful sense of personal responsibility was expressed by a preservice teacher who, although shaken by what she had learned, was determined not to blame the rest of society without turning her criticism upon herself as well:

> What I have been introduced to is a lot of reality that I cannot pretend doesn't exist anymore. In the face of this, I am angry, cynical, and a little less hopeful....I am not giving up. But pretending to like what I see in the schools and in society would be dishonest....[But] who do I blame? It cannot be entirely the system. But me, I have fallen into the traps I said I never would. I have compromised my ideals to fit into a stupid system. And now I blame the system. But...what am I doing? How will I change? Will I change?

Summary and Conclusion

This study was based on the belief that multicultural self-development is essential if European American preservice teachers are to help narrow the opportunity gap. We assumed that self-development requires experience and discussion within an affectively safe yet intellectually challenging classroom environment. Thus, we sought to provide an emotional backdrop against which preservice teachers would be willing to entertain new, often threatening ideas related to their own role in perpetuating the opportunity gap. We also provided numerous opportunities to reflect upon and discuss a variety of sociocultural experiences. Multicultural literature was among the most substantive and effective of these experiences.

Since experience can be interpreted differently or ignored altogether, we helped our students focus on the issues most closely related to the opportunity gap. To promote broad, substantive understanding, we encouraged them to contemplate a variety of social and historical parallels, including their own complicity in perpetuating a system of social inequity. Finally, we utilized journal assignments and class discussions to focus attention on the implications for their current and anticipated perspectives and actions.

We concluded that multicultural self-development is possible. The self-development that occurred in our classes was evident in the struggle and resistance, the modification of perspectives, and the ways in which self-identity and personal activity gradually changed throughout the semester. For some students development was minimal; however, others demonstrated significant growth. In the most profound cases the preservice teachers consciously modified their own self-development and held themselves personally accountable for self-critical examination.

While the self-development we have described may not seem as tangible as it might if the

students had actually redistributed their personal resources, it is significant in a different way. As the semester proceeded, our students expressed a growing sense of humility and increased awareness that continued self-development requires ongoing exposure to varying sociocultural experiences. These understandings and actions were remarkably consistent with Banks' (1989) suggestion that mainstream Americans question their "false sense of superiority" and seek opportunities to "benefit from the knowledge, perspectives, and frames of reference" of other sociocultural groups.

We began this paper with the claim that mainstream Americans can no longer ignore or presume to serve other sociocultural groups simply by seeking to change those groups. Instead, we must begin to examine our own beliefs and actions in light of the experiences and views of others. Acknowledging both our past and our present, each of us must ask "What am I doing? How will I change? Will I change?" When the dominant culture is willing to confront its own complicity in perpetuating the opportunity gap, we may begin to legitimately speak of "serving" the sociocultural other.

References

Anderson, J. R. (1985). Cognitive psychology and its implications. New York: Freeman.

Anyon, J. (1979). Social class and the hidden curriculum of work. Journal of Education, 162(1), 67-92.

Atwell, N. (1988). A special writer at work. In T. Newkirk & N. Atwell (Eds.), Understanding writing. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Au, K. P. (1980). Participation structures in a reading lesson with Hawaiian children: Analysis of a culturally appropriate instructional event. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 11(2), 91-115.

Baldwin, J. (1988). A talk to teachers. In R. Simonson & S. Walker (Eds.), The graywolf annual five: Multicultural literacy (pp. 3-12). St. Paul: Graywolf Press.

Banks, J. A. (1987). The social studies, ethnic diversity, and social change. The Elementary School Journal, 87,(5), 531-543.

Banks, J. A. (1989). Integrating the curriculum with ethnic content: Approaches and guidelines. In J. A. Banks & C. A. Mcgee Banks (Eds.), Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives (pp. 189-206). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Berg, B. L. (1989). Qualitative research methods for the social sciences. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1966). The social construction of reality. New York: Anchor Books.

Beatty, P. (1992). Lupita mañana. New York: Morrow Junior Books.

Blumer, H. (1969). Symbolic interaction: Perspective and method. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Chevalier, M. E. (1994). Teacher-learner relationships in adult education classrooms: The social construction of trust. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

Coles, R. (1989). The call of stories: Teaching and the moral imagination. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Eanet, M. (1990). Expanding literacy by the use of imaginative literature in the teacher education classroom. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Reading Forum, Sarasota, FL, Dec. 12-15, 1990. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 337 770)

Florez, V. & Hadaway, N. L. (1986). Bridging linguistic and cultural differences through reading: Multiethnic literature in the classroom. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwest Regional Conference of the International Reading Association, San Antonio, TX, Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 1986. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 278 959)

Garcia, J. & Pugh, S. L. (1992). Children's nonfiction multicultural literature: Some promises and disappointments. Equity and Excellence, 25(2-4), 151-155.

Giroux, H. A. (1985). Teachers as transformative intellectuals. Social Education, May, 376-379.

Goswami, D. & Stillman, P. R. (1987). Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Greene, B. (1973). Summer of my German soldier. New York: Dell.

Greene, M. (1988). The dialectic of freedom. New York: Teachers College Press.

Greene, M. (1993). The passions of pluralism: Multiculturalism and the expanding community. Educational Researcher, January-February, 13-18.

Harste, J. & Short, K. (1991). Literature circles and literature response activities. In B. M. Power & R. Hubbard (Eds.), Literacy in process (pp. 191-202). Portsmouth, NH:

Heinemann.

Heath, S. B. (1987). A lot of talk about nothing. In D. Goswami & P. R. Stillman (Eds.), Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hewitt, J. P. (1994). Self and society: A symbolic interactionist social psychology. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Highwater, J. (1986). I wear the morning star. New York: Harper Collins.

Houser, N. O. (In Press). Multicultural education for the dominant culture: Toward the development of a multicultural sense of self. Urban Education.

Houser, N. O. (1990). Teacher-researcher: The synthesis of roles for teacher empowerment. Action in Teacher Education, 12(2), 55-60.

Jacob, E. (1987). Qualitative research traditions: A review. Review of Educational Research, 57(1), 1-50.

Lofland, J. & Lofland, L. H. (1984). Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

McKernan, J. (1988). Teacher as researcher: Paradigm and praxis. Contemporary Education, 59(5), 154-158.

McLuhan, T. C. (1971). Touch the Earth: A self-portrait of Indian existence. New York: Touchstone.

Mead, G. H. (1934). Mind, self, and society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mishler, E. G. (1979). Meaning in context: Is there any other kind? Harvard Educational Review, 49(1), 1-19.

Myers, W. D. (1988). Scorpions. New York: Harper Collins.

Neisser, U. (1976). Cognition and reality: Principles and implications of cognitive psychology. New York: Freeman.

Nieto, S. (1992). Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education. New York: Longman.

Noddings, N. (1992). The challenge to care in schools. New York: Teachers College Press.

Norton, D. E. (1985). Language and cognitive development through multicultural literature. Childhood Education, 62(2), 103-108.

Ogbu, J. U. (1987). Opportunity structure, cultural boundaries, and literacy. In J. A. Langer (Ed.), Language literacy and culture: Issues of society and schooling. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Paley, V. G. (1992). You can't say you can't play. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Piaget, J. (1972). The principles of genetic epistemology. New York: Basic Books.

Philips, S. U. (1972). Participation structures and communicative competence: Warm springs children in community and classroom. In C. B. Cazden, V. P. John, & D. Hymes (Eds)., Functions of language in the classroom. Columbia University: Teachers College Press.

Reimer, K. M. (1992). Multiethnic literature: Holding fast to dreams. Language Arts, 69, 14-21.

Roberts, P. L., & Cecil, N. L. (1993). Developing multicultural awareness through children's literature: A guide for teachers and librarians, grades K-8. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Schatzman, L., & Strauss, A. L. (1973). Field research: Strategies for a natural sociology. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Sleeter, C. E., & Grant, C. A. (1988). Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender. New York: Merrill.

Storm, H. (1972). Seven arrows. New York: Ballantine.

Stover, L. (1988). The uses of adolescent literature in teacher education. Teaching Education, 2(2), 55-56.

Uchida, Y. (1978). Journey home. New York: Macmillan.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1986). Thought and language. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991). Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Zinn, H. (1980). Columbus, the Indians, and human progress. In A people's history of the United States. New York: Harper Collins.

Footnotes

1. In this paper we use the terms "European American," "mainstream American," and "dominant culture" more or less interchangeably. The terms "dominant culture" and "dominated cultures" are used by Nieto (1992) to distinguish between the European American mainstream and those sociocultural groups that have been systematically dominated by the ideologies and actions of that mainstream. It should be noted that the term "mainstream" indicates privilege rather than superiority and that there is no absolute demarcation between dominant and dominated cultures. To some degree "dominance" is relative and context specific.

2. Although the focus of this paper is related primarily to issues of ethnicity, we define "culture" broadly to include race, class, gender, religious and sexual orientation, and so forth.

3. Although we used a qualitative methodology and intepretivist paradigm to collect and analyze our data, our approach most closely resembles the action research orientation of the teacher-researcher (Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Houser, 1990; McKernan, 1988).

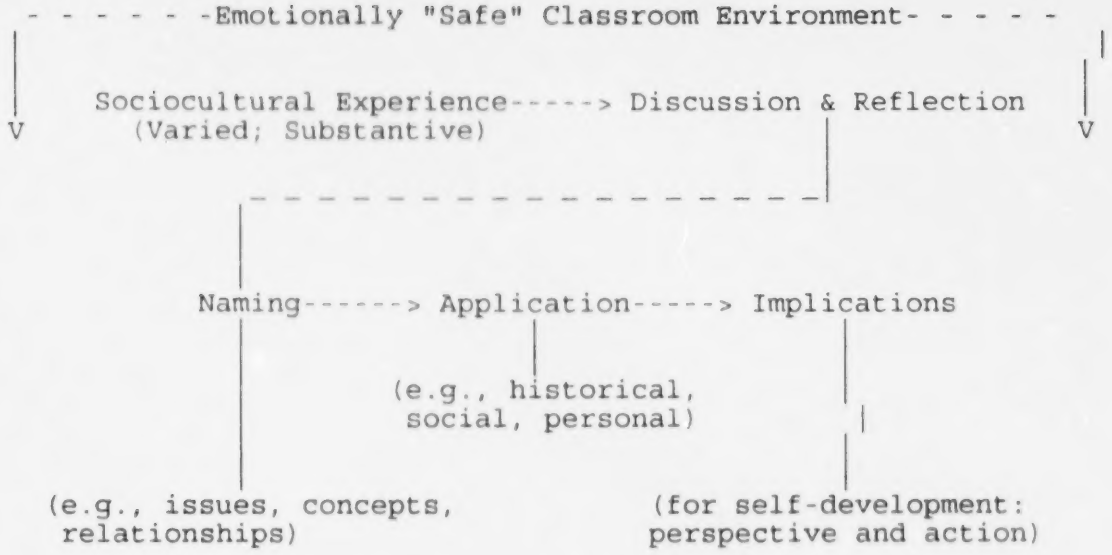

Figure 1. An Instructional Framework for Multicultural Self-development.